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ABSTRACT

A review of the literature on child language reveals little research on overgeneralization in the speech of the bilingual child. Questions arise regarding (1) the existence of interlingual overgeneralizations, and (2) the possibility that monolingual deviations and bilingual code switching might be forms of overgeneralization. Because a model for identifying overgeneralization in other languages or in bilinguals is lacking, a competence-based model and definition of overgeneralization are supplied in this study. Using this model and definition, 42 overgeneralizations are identified in the language samples of five Spanish-English bilinguals between the ages of two and five. Spanish was chosen for the study because its great variety of root and affix variants allows greater scope for the discussion of preference. No "interlanguage overgeneralizations" were found, possibly indicating that inflections become language specific earlier than entire lexemes. In both Spanish and English, affix markers are preferred over other types of internal markers. Frequency of use of roots and affixes by adults in the child's environment apparently determines the child's preferred roots and affixes. A suggestion is made that the is a distinct type and is a result of a different process. Actually, they are all an attempt at simplification and so are overgeneralizations. (Author/AMH)

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OVERGENERALIZATION IN A GROUP OF SPANISH-ENGLISH BILINGUAL CHILDREN

by

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INTRODUCTION

Overgeneralizations are, according to Brown and Bellugi, "the most informative departures" (p. 267) of all the child's deviations. Despite the informative nature of overgeneralizations, there had been no study to date which dealt exclusively with the overgeneralizations belonging to Spanish-English bilinguals. The purpose of this study was to analyze the overgeneralizations of five bilingual children and to focus on three major concerns. First, it was not known whether the overgeneralizations of Spanish and English monolinguals would differ from the overgeneralizations found in the speech samples of Spanish-English bilinguals. In 1949, Lecpold, one of the first researchers of bilingual child language acquisition, reported finding overgeneralizations which were a mixture of the child's two languages (e.g., the prefix of one language would be attached to the root of the other language). Consequently, one objective of this study was to determine to what degree these "interlanguage" overgeneralizations would be found in

* This paper was presented at the USC/UCLA Second Language Research Forum in Los Angeles, 1978.

the language samples being studied. Secondly, it was hoped that by studying a morphologically rich language such as Spanish, it would be possible to better discuss the classic question of preference (i.e., what factors determine which affixes and roots are preferred by the individual?) The final objective was to show that overgeneralizations and other deviations found in children's speech are superficially distinct yet manifestations of a single process, simplification.

The identification of overgenerlizations across two languages was not an easy task at first particularly since the literature did not offer a concise operational definition which could be used for identifying overgeneralizations in a language other than English. Without such a definition I was left to identify overgeneralizations on the basis of their surface shape, an oftentimes deceiving practice. It became necessary to establish a competence based definition of overgeneralization (i.e., a definition which specified the way in which the child's competence differed from the adult's) which could be used to identify overgeneralizations in Spanish as well as English.

HOW LEXEMES ARE FORMED[1]

The formation of lexemes can be explained in terms of cycles.[2] It is believed that at each stage of forming his lexeme, the individual must select the proper item from large inventories and that with each lexeme, inventories are scanned again and again as if in cycles. At the lowest

level the first cycle is run: an inventory of root entries must be scanned. The root entry which semantically meets the speaker's needs emerges during the first cycle. Each root entry, besides containing semantic information, has morphosyntactic and phonological information peculiar to the root. The applicability of consequent cycles is dependent upon the presence or absence of certain types of information contained in the root. So then, much like syntactical phrase markers, the lexical root entries lay the ground work for the word's well-formedness.

Second cycle morphosyntactic rules like syntactic transformational rules are responsible for converting the abstract structure (provided by the lexical root entries) into a fairly concrete surface form. During the second cycle, a series of morphosyntactic rules is scanned and the appropriate one located. Many though not all of these second cycle rules will add to the root affix depending on the lexical root's specifications unless the lexical root specifies, by means of restrictive features, that it cannot accept the affix. If, in the second cycle, the affix has been identified in its base form (e.g./s/) then the third cycle will produce the appropriate allomorph. What is scanned during the third cycle is a series of phonological rules which will yield the appropriate allomorph.

THE ROOT ENTRY: A LEXEME'S BLUEPRINT

The root entry is very much like a blueprint: it characterizes the root, sets out certain constraints, and lays the foundation for derivatives by specifying the identity of the second cycle item which may surface. More specifically, the root entry includes: 1) a phonological transcription of the noun/verb root's basic form (for the adult, it is the infinitive form, and for the child, it is the root form which surfaces in the overgeneralization); 2) the identity of the grammatical class to which the root may belong (i.e., noun, verb,etc.) and any sub-category to which it may belong (e.g., a special class of verbs); 3) semantic information about the root (general information is followed by specific information); 4) root variation (i.e., vowel changes, root allomorphs), the conditions under which this root variant must occur, rule blocking (i.e. preventing a second cycle rule from applying to that particular root).

For purposes of comparing and contrasting the adult's and child's competences, each lexeme's root entry as well as pertinent second cycle information has be represented in "competence models." The models are only speculation based on very limited data and are not intended as expla - nations of the ways in which lexemes operate, only the knowledge which appears to be responsible for the surface shape of the lexemes (and also the overgeneralizations) of English and Spanish. For example, the adult competence model of talked, a regular English verb, is represented as follows.

First Cycle — /tɑk/ V

Second Cycle — $\emptyset \rightarrow +/d/ \,/\, \begin{bmatrix} \text{P.T.} \\ \text{V} \end{bmatrix}$

This representation means that /tɑk/ and its phonological variants can, with the appropriate suffix, function as a verb. There are no other restrictions listed in the entry which would prohibit the regular past tense suffix /d/ from surfacing (see rule below horizontal line). The past tense rule states that a root with no affix (indicated with $\emptyset$) will yield (indicated with the arrow -->) an ed affix (indicated with +/d/) after a verb which is signalling the past tense (indicated by $\begin{bmatrix} \text{P.T.} \\ \text{V} \end{bmatrix}$). The information before the slash (/) specifies the shape that will result: the information after the slash specifies the conditions that must be met in order for the change in shape to occur.

On the other hand, the child's competence model for the past tense English verb <u>broke</u> might appear as follows.

/brek/
V
* [brok] /[P.T.]

$\emptyset \rightarrow + /d/ \begin{bmatrix} \text{P.T.} \\ \text{V} \end{bmatrix}$

This means that the basic form /brek/ and any of its variants (e.g. [brok]) can, with the appropriate affix, function as verbs. While the [brok]/P.T.

means that the variant, [brok] will surface when the past tense (indicated with the initials P.T.) is signaled. The rule for appending the regular past tense morpheme /d/ is shown below the horizontal line. The asterisk (*) indicates that this rule must be blocked when the past tense is formed. The formation of English nouns is similar. The only difference is that a morpheme of number rather than tense is involved.

Take the competence model of the Spanish past tense verb cantó (English translation: He/she/it sang). The V in the model means that the base form /kɑnt/ and its variants can take sets of unmarked V affixes. As the second cycle information indicates, /ó/, a V affix, is added to /kɑnt/ when the speaker uses a V verb in the present indicative tense (P.I.) to mark the third person (3rd p.) singular (Sing.).

/kɑnt/
V

$$\frac{}{\emptyset \dashrightarrow + /\acute{o}/} \begin{bmatrix} \text{P.I.} \\ \text{3rd p.} \\ \text{Sing.} \\ \text{V} \end{bmatrix}$$

A DEFINITION OF OVERGENERALIZATION

Overgeneralization is a type of lexeme simplification. In the overgeneralization one or several of the root features which determine lexeme shape are, when compared with the adult's competence model, (1) absent, and/or (2) erroneous. In terms of surface form, the overgeneralization differs from its adult counterpart in its root and/or affix shape. Take for

example, the competence models of the child's English overgeneralization breaked and its adult equivalent, broke.

Adult Model of broke

/brek/
V
* [brok] / [P.T.]

$$\emptyset \dashrightarrow + /d/ \;/\; \begin{bmatrix} \text{P.T.} \\ \text{V} \end{bmatrix}$$

Child Model of breaked

/brek/
V

$$\emptyset \dashrightarrow + /d/ \;/\; \begin{bmatrix} \text{P.T.} \\ \text{V} \end{bmatrix}$$

In order for the adult to form the past tense of the verb to break , the root form of the verb must (1) undergo a vowel change and (2) must block the usual past tense affix rule. The child apparently has forgone these two restrictions: (1) the root /brek/ is used more indiscriminately by the child than the adult, (2) the unmarked past tense affix addition rule which is blocked by the adult model is preferred by the child.

The model for the child's Spanish deviation pongar is also a good example of overgeneralization.

Adult Model of poner

/pon/
V_I
poŋg / P.I. 1st p. sing.

$$\emptyset \dashrightarrow + /\varepsilon r/ \;/\; \begin{bmatrix} \text{Inf.} \\ V_I \end{bmatrix}$$

$$\emptyset \dashrightarrow + /ar/ \;/\; \begin{bmatrix} \text{Inf.} \\ \text{V} \end{bmatrix}$$

Child Model of pongar

/poŋg/
V

$$\emptyset \dashrightarrow + /ar/ \;/\; \begin{bmatrix} \text{Inf.} \\ \text{V} \end{bmatrix}$$

In order for the adult to form the Spanish infinitive poner (English translation: to put) (1) the basic form of the verb /pon/ must surface, not the less frequently used [ponɡ] (2) /pon/ must be tagged as a V_I verb, and (3) the affixes that are normally used for V_I infinitives, /ɛ/ and /r/, must be appended. The child overlooks both specifications. First, the root [pong], which is more restrictive in the adult model, is used indiscriminately by the child. Secondly, the verb, which belongs to the marked V_I category in the adult model and takes V_I affixes is assigned membership in the unmarked V category in the child's model and accordingly takes the unmarked V affixes.

SUBJECTS

For this study of overgeneralization, the languae samples of five subjects were selected from a larger corpus of samples of nineteen Spanish English bilingual children from the Santa Barbara-Goleta area. The 19 children who participated in this study were selected to participate because (1) they heard Spanish and English in almost equal amounts, (2) they were of Mexican descent and, (3) they were talkative with strangers. All children in the study were from working-class families.

Five children were selected from this larger group of subjects: Danny and Jaime, male 3 year olds; Miguel, a male 4.4 year old; Josefina, a female 4 year old; and Rogelio, a male 5 year old.[3] These particular children were selected for the analysis of overgeneralization because :

(1) their language samples contained the greatest number of overgeneralizations, (2) their language samples contained a wide variety of overgeneralizations, and (3) they represented a diversity of ages.

PROCEDURE

Language samples were collected with Sony cassette tape recorders TC-110. During the taping sessions, the experimenters also recorded the data (i.e.,the child's utterance and context) by hand. Toys were used to elicit spontaneous speech.

Four teams of female Experimenters gathered language samples. Each team consisted of a Spanish/English bilingual and an English monolingual. When they were interacting with the child, the first mentioned Experimenter spoke only Spanish while the monolingual Experimenter spoke only English.

The language samples usually contained conversation between child and Experimenter. Sometimes the child interacted with others as well (e.g., mother, aunt, etc.). To keep the sessions as similar as possible for all subjects, an instruction sheet was distributed to each parent.

Experimenters followed a general set of guidelines. They (1) did not prompt the child, (2) tried not to ask questions requiring "yes" or "no" answers, (3) tried not to ask questions requiring the child to name or label, (4) repeated the child's response for purposes of clarification, and (5) asked the child to repeat his utterance whenever it was unclear.

The Experimenters who taped a child also transcribed that child's utterances. Pertinent information about the child's environment, or the Experimenter's comments were provided in the left-hand column of the transcripts sheet. Also, the Experimenter's and the mother's speech was transcribed if it seemed to elicit an utterance from the child.

The Experimenters tried to transcribe all utterances although sometimes this was impossible. If an utterance was unintelligible after listening to it three times, then it was recorded as "unintelligible." Utterances which were marked with "I", "E" , or "R" indicated that the utterance was an imitation, emphatic or repetitious, respectively .

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Forty-three different overgeneralizations were found in the bilingual language samples: 7 were English verb overgeneralizations, 29 were Spanish verb overgeneralizations, 5 were English noun overgeneralizations, and 2 were Spanish noun overgeneralizations. See Appendix B for a list of these overgeneralizations together with their standard adult equivalents.

A. THE QUESTION OF "INTERLANGUAGE OVERGENERALIZATIONS"

Curiously enough, there were no "interlanguage overgeneralizations" in the five sets of language samples as I had expected. While the subjects very frequently code-switched entire lexemes, they failed to do so with their inflections. Perhaps inflections become language specific earlier in the language acquisition process than entire lexemes. Certainly this

is a question worth studying further.

B. THE QUESTION OF PREFERENCE

1. Preferred Markers: The Internal Marker or the Suffix

In both Spanish and English, affix markers are preferred over other types of more internal markers (i.e., either root variants or medial vowels). The person and number marker ⟨mos⟩ surfaces in the overgeneralizations debimos (adult form: debemos) while the internal vowel-marker is deviant: ⟨i⟩ usually signals the past and the ⟨e⟩ the present tense. Even when both a suffix and an internal vowel normally mark person and number, the suffix is the preferred one in the overgeneralization. The deviation trajeste for trajiste is such an example. The person and number marker, ⟨ste⟩ surfaces while the vowel marker for second person singular ⟨i⟩, is overlooked. Notice that even in English the child who prefers breaked prefers an affix marker to a more internal marker (i.e., root variation).

2. Determining the Preferred Root

The present tense verb root as well as the singular noun root was preferred in the English and most of the Spanish overgeneralizations. Nevertheless I found that a verb's root variants were in competition with one another and there didn't appear to be any general tendencies. No paradigmatic category prevailed across all verbs: sometimes the preferred root variant was the imperative root (e.g. pongar, traigar), sometimes the infinitive and present tense root (e.g., breaked, taked, runned, tumbió)

the present indicative third person singular root (e.g., metó, haso, tieno, juegar, sabo) infinitive and present indicative first person plural root (e.g., venistes, teno, perdó, ponió), the preterite root (e.g., trajaron, hició).

Once factor which might determine the preferred root is sheer frequency. It is not difficult to appreciate the role that frequency might take in determining the preferred root. For example, it is understandable why the child would prefer the root [pong] : he probably hears it quite often in such phrases as "Pongase su sueter" (English translation: "Put your sweater on"), "Ponga la llave en la mesa" (English translation: Put the key on the table"). It is equally understandable why the child would prefer the [sab] root variant of the verb saber when he overgeneralizes sabo : the child might be exposed to such phrases as "¿Sabes que es ésto?" (English translation: "Do you know what this is?") and "Sabe sus letras" (English translation: He knows his letters"). The same is true of English roots as well: [brek] might be heard in phrases like "Don't break it!" and "You're gonna break that!" Frequency could also account for some of the similarities and dissimilarities among the child subjects. Root variants which are preferred by the majority of the child subjects might be heard with great frequency by most subjects. On the other hand, disagreement of preferred roots is probably due to frequency differences.

The semantic characteristics of each verb delimit which root variants are used in the child's environment and they also determine in part which root variants are heard with greatest frequency. For example, the meaning of the verb saber (English translation: "to know") lends itself to other verb forms but not to the imperative. After all, it is not very often that one hears a mother ordering her chi d to "know" certain information. The frequency with which a root variant is heard is also determined by the verb's role in idioms. One of the child speakers (M.A.) for example, preferred [tɛn] in the overgeneralizations tenimos, teno, and tene. His mother reports that the expression "tenemos que.." is heard daily from both herself and M.A.'s older sister. This expression, however, may be less frequently heard in the linguistic environment of other children. This might explain why D.G. preferred [tyɛn] rather than [tɛn] . In short, the verb's semantic characteristics as well as its role in certain idioms might explain why the Spanish root variants preferred do not fall into one general category such as imperative or third person singular.

3. PREFERRED AFFIXES

In the same way that the English speaking child prefers the unmarked plural affix, /s/, the Spanish speaking child prefers V verb inflections. Notice that the following list of overgeneralizations all have V affixes even though their adult counterparts take V_I affixes.

Adult Form	Child's Overgeneralization
traer (V_I)	traigar (V)
trayeron (V_I)	trajaron (V)
salió (V_{II})	salóo (V)
movió (V_I)	movóo (V)
metió (V_I)	metóo (V)
perdió (V_I)	perdóo (V)
crecer (V_I)	cresar (V)
poner (V_I)	pongar (V)
pusiste (V_I)	pongaste (V)

As further evidence of the child's preference for V affixes, one need only listen to the Spanish of many Mexican nationals living in the southwest: many of the verbs imported from English are assigned V affixes (e.g., pushar, shootear). There are few exceptions to this general rule: tumbar (an V verb) was treated as an V_I when D.G. said tumbió; and deber and tener (V verbs) were treated as V_{II} verbs at the moment debimos and tenimos were uttered. In general, however, the children showed a preference for the inflections of the V verb category.

Still other factors might determine to some degree which affix is preferred. The frequency with which a vowel marker is heard with a particular root might influence the child's choice of vowel marker. It may be that the overgeneralization traigar has resulted because the /'a/ had been frequently heard with the root /trqig/. This is not difficult to imagine since the result-

ing form would be traiga, the imperative form. The same may be true of the overgeneralizations pongar and pongaste: a high frequency verb form (i.e., ponga) might cause a bond to be formed between a root (i.e., pong) and a vowel affix (i.e., <a>). This in turn might dominate and push out the correct vowel marker resulting in these two overgeneralizations.

Previously I said that the overgeneralized vowel marker might have been influenced by its frequent occurrence with a given root. But what about the relationship between the vowel and its person and number marker? That is, might the overgeneralization debimos have occurred because of the frequency with which the /i/ and /mos/ are found together? There are two levels on which one can study the frequency of their relationship: paradigmatic distribution and sheer frequency. In terms of its paradigmatic distribution, the /i/ is found with /mos/ more frequently than any other vowel marker. When this paradigm is studied we find that /i/ is found with /mos/ to mark the present indicative of the V_{II} verb class and to mark the preterite indicative of the V_{I} and V_{II} verb classes three times while /ɛ/ is found with /mos/ only once, and /ɑ/ twice. On the other hand, when one studies the overgeneralization cresar, he might believe that /ɑ/ is preferred because in terms of its paradigmatic distribution, /ɑ/ is heard with /krɛs/ quite frequently. Yet this is not so. Practically speaking, the command form is the only form of the verb which takes an /ɑ/ (i.e., crezca!, English translation: "You grow!") and it is questionable that an adult would ever produce such an

utterance. However, in terms of sheer frequency, /ɑ/ and /r/ are frequently heard together.

C. THE RELATEDNESS OF OVERGENERALIZATION TO OTHER DEVIATIONS FOUND IN THE SAMPLES OF CHILD SUBJECTS

In the literature on child language, has of the sentence "They has tires on both sides." is often termed "Subject-verb disagreement" and "Analogical leveling" while daddy for man is termed a "Semantic overextension " by Clark (1972). On the other hand, "Code-switching" is the term assigned such deviations like gatos in the sentence "Be quiet gatos." Some researchers have reported that the "Wrong allomorph" has been supplied in such deviations as footez for feet (Cazden, 1968). "Holophrastic"or "Telegraphic speech" has been used to describe deviations like go for goes (Brown, 1973). Finally, when deviations such as looks surface rather than look in the sentence "He don't looks like nothing " researchers often say that a "transformational rule" has not been learned. With such a diversity of terms in the literature on child language, one is left with the impression that each type of deviation is truely distinct and the result of a very different process. This ,however, is not true. ~~They are all the result of a very different process. This,however, is not true~~. They are all the result of a single process: simplification. The only thing that distinguishes them is the nature of the adult boundary (e.g., person, number, language, part of speech, case, etc.) which the child is crossing. The competence models, besides allowing a clearer and competence-based

definition of overgeneralization, helped to downplay the differences and appreciate the similarities between each of the types of deviations frequently discussed in the literature on child language. The only distinction to be made is whether the simplification has been made in the first cycle level, that is, in the lexical root entry, or on the second cycle level. After studying the deviations in this light it seems peculiar that one type of deviation has been singled out to receive the name of "overgeneralization" when in fact all of the other deviations frequently reported in the literature on child language are overgeneralizations as well. This diversity of terms indicates that researchers have failed to recognize the similarities found to exist between deviations and have given more attention to the surface shape of deviations, a practice which will not ultimately provide information about language acquisition.

NOTES

1. For a simplified description of the morphologies of Spanish and English see APPENDIX A.

2. The notion of cycles is not new to linguists. In Aspects of the Theory of Syntax (1965), Chomsky discusses cyclic activity on a syntactic level while in Sound Patterns of English (1968) Chomsky and Halle discuss the role of cycles in determining word stress.

3. Danny=D.G.; Jaime=J.M.; Miguel= Josefina=J.C.; Rogelio= R.P.

4. Bull.,1968

5. All paradigms of Spanish verbs are for non-voceo languages.

6. A token frequency count indicates that ⟨a⟩ affix vowels are heard more frequently than are either ⟨i⟩ or ⟨e⟩ verbs. Two Spanish-speaking mothers were tape recorded while speaking to their children. One mother was Mexican-American while the other was Mexican. Mothers were not told that their speech was under observation. Taping sessions with each mother were 1 hour in length. Mother A used 187 Spanish verbs, 54% of which contained ⟨a⟩ affixes. 30% of the verbs contained ⟨e⟩ affixes while the remaining 16 % contained ⟨i⟩ suffixes. The distribution of Mother B's verbs was similar: 58% of her 47 verbs contained the ⟨a⟩ affix while 40% of the verbs had ⟨e⟩ affixes and the remaining affixes contained ⟨i⟩.

7. We do not know if the child was exposed to the past participle woke or waked.

8. Non-orthographic accents have been supplied in parentheses for certain words in order to show the differences in stress between the child's and adult's words.

9. Persons, fishes, and ropas are overgeneralizations only if the child's models were people, fish, and ropa.

APPENDIX A

THE MORPHOLOGIES OF SPANISH AND ENGLISH

In this section we will briefly describe the morphologies of nouns and verbs in English and Spanish and discuss major differences between the word structures of the two languages. By no means is this description exhaustive. It is merely a simplification intended to give the reader an appreciation for some morphological differences that exist across the two languages.

English and Spanish Nouns

The morphology of Spanish and English nouns are quite different. All Spanish nouns form the plural by adding the suffix <s> (e.g., casa-> casas) or <es> (e.g., buzón->

buzones). Also, some English nouns signal plurality by not taking the usual plural suffix (e.g., foot-->feet). In fact, the nouns which represent plurality by root variation usually do not take the regular <s> plural suffix. Still other English nouns signal plurality by taking a very uncommon affix (e.g., child-->children).

English and Spanish Verbs

The morphologies of Spanish and English verbs are even more different than are the nouns. To begin with, the English verb is made up of a root with or without an affix, thereby making the English verb system a relatively simple one: the verb form which is found in the infinitive (e.g., to talk) is the same that is found for almost all persons of the simple present (e.g., I talk, you talk, we talk, etc.). For third person singular one must use the infinitive verb form and an <s> third person marker (e.g., He talks). To mark the past tense of all persons of the paradigm one need only take the infinitive verb form and add an <ed> past tense suffix (e.g., I talked, you talked). This at least is how regular verbs are treated in English. Irregular verbs, on the other hand, change their shape in the past tense: Usually (1) the root form changes (e.g. break--> broke) and (2) the past tense suffix <ed> is not appended to the original infinitive form.

Spanish verbs, on the other hand, are made up of three parts: a root and an affix that is made up of two morphemes.[4] The first morpheme is variable: it varies with each verb class. The /ɛ/ of comes is this type of marker. One might say that this marker is category-specific. The second morpheme is invariant, that is, it does not change with each verb class (e.g., the /s/ affix signals second person singular of the present tense for all verbs regardless of the verb's membership in one of the three categories). This morpheme of the affix will be called the non-category specific affix. These two types of morphemes can best be appreciated if one studies paradigms[5] of the three verb classes. Notice below in these present tense paradigms how the final morpheme is the same for all verb classes but that the medial morpheme varies.

V (cantar)	V I (comer)	V II (dormir)
cant-Ø-o	com-Ø-o	duerm-Ø-o
cant-a-s	com-e-s	duerm-e-s
cant-a-Ø	com-e-Ø	duerm-e-Ø
cant-a-mos	com-e-mos	dorm-i-mos
cant-a-n	com-e-n	duerm-e-n
cant-a-n	com-e-n	duerm-e-n

Second, in Spanish, root variation is often predictable, that is, the root variants follow a rule dictated by the language. There are many root variation rules that can be found in Spanish. Two of these variations, i.e. O→ue (in the first, second and third persons of the singular of the present tense) and O→u (in second and third person plural of the preterite tense) are shown below,

Dormir	present tense	preterite tense
	duermo	dormimos
	duermes	durmieron
	duerme	durmieron

Third, English past tense verbs either (1) provide root variants without adding an affix (e.g., broke), (2) do not provide a variant but add an affix (e.g., talked), or (3) provide root variants and add affixes (e.g., said). In other words, the root variant and affix are often mutually exclusive. This, however, is not the case when marking person in the Spanish verb system: in Spanish, person can be marked both by a root variant and an affix (e.g., dorm-i-mos (We sleep); duerm-e-s (You sleep).

Fourth, excluding the past participle root form, the English roots usually offer a maximum of two root variants, while Spanish verb roots sometimes offer as many as four

variants (e.g., decir has dig-, dic-, dec-, and dij-).

Fifth, marked and unmarked verb affixes of English and Spanish do not resemble one another. By "marked" we mean that the affix is limited in its use: it goes with only those lexical roots that accept it. By an "unmarked" affix we mean an affix that has a wider usage: it yields only to those lexical roots that prefer "marked" affixes. In both English and Spanish, the plural noun affix /s/ is unmarked. However, this is where the similarity ends between Spanish and English marked and unmarked affixes. In English, /d/ is the unmarked verb affix for the past tense while other past tense markers (i.e., the absence of the /d/ affix) are marked. The Spanish verb affix system is quite different and more complicated. Spanish verbs generally fall into one of three categories. They are either -AR verbs (which will be indicated in our competence models with the initial V) -ER verbs (indicated with V_I) and -IR verbs (indicated with V_{II}). Each verb category has its own set of affixes for tenses and persons. V affixes are unmarked[6] while V_I and V_{II} are more marked. So Spanish does not have a single unmarked affix as does English, but instead offers an entire set of unmarked affixes.

APPENDIX B

Table 1

English and Spanish verb overgeneralizations found in the data are listed below. Each overgeneralization is preceded by its adult equivalent and followed by (1) the sentence in which the overgeneralization was found and (2) the subject's initials.

	Standard Adult Form	Child's Overgen.	Sentence context	Location of Overgen.
English Verb Overgen.	broke	breaked	It breaked.	R.P.
			They breaked the house.	D.G.
			I breaked it.	J.C.
	took	taked	The bus taked us.	R.P.
	ran	runned	They're gonna have a bath, but they runned out and...	R.P.
			They got him and they runned away.	D.G.
	woke	waked	And they waked up. Look it.	D.G.
	stuck	sticked	Because the tee shirt sticked on.	J.C.
	came	camed	This one camed out.	R.P.
	fell	felled	So he went off and he felled in the water.	R.P.

	Standard Adult Form	Child's Overgen.	Sentence context	Location of Overgen.
Spanish Verb Overgen	traer (to bring)	traigar	Voy a traigar mis indios.	D.G.
	trayeron (brought)	trajaron	¿Dónde trajaron, eh?	J.M.
	salió (left)	salo	No se salo.	J.M.
	movió (moved)	movo	¿Y se movó?	J.M.
	metió	meto	Mira como se metó.	R.P.
	perdió (got lost)	perdo	Ese perdo.	R.P.
	viniste(s) (came)	venistes	Así te venistes.	J.C.
	hago (do)	haso	Yo la haso.	D.G.
	hizo (did)	hicio	Uno se hicio pipi.	J.C.
	hice (did)	hicí	Yo lo hicé /isi/	J.C.
	viste(s) (saw)	vei(s)tes	¿La veites?	J.M.
	tengo (have)	tieno	Aquí está, yo lo tieno.	D.G.
	"	teno	Yo teno uno.	M.A.
	tiene (has)	tene	Y tene silla.	M.A.

Standard Adult Form	Child's Overgen.	Sentence	Location of Overgen.
jugar (to play)	juegar	Voy a..los carritos a juegar.	R.P.
crecer (to grow)	cresar	Se va a cresar.	R.P.
sé (know)	sabo	Yo no sabo.	R.P.
poner (to put)	ponguer	Le voy a ponguer éstas.	D.G.
poner (to put)	pongar	Le voy a pongar ésta.	D.G.
poniendo (putting)	ponguiendo	Y está ponguiendo ésto aquí, mira.	D.G.
pone (put)	pongue	Le pongue la llanta asi en la cabeza.	D.G.
púse (put)	poní	Poní un stick allí y uno se lo comió.	J.C.
pusistes (put)	pongastes	Los pongastes.	J.M.
púso (put)	ponió	La ponió las arretes.	J.C.
caliento (warm)	calento	Aquí lo calento.	R.P.
debemos (should)	debimos	Debimos a tener dos banos.	M.A.
tenemos (have)	tenimos	Tenimos elefante	M.A.
tumbó (fell)	tumbió	Lo tumbió.	D.G.

Table 2

English and Spanish noun overgeneralizations found in the data are listed below. Each overgeneralization is preceded by its adult equivalent and followed by (1) the sentence in which the overgeneralization was found and (2) the subject's initials.

	Standard Adult Form	Child's Overgen.	Sentence context	Location of Overgen.
English Noun Overgen.	people	persons	And this is two persons taking a bath.	M.A.
	feet	foots	And his foots.	D.G.
	feet	feets	Oh, he's seeing some feets, some feet.	M.A.
	fish	fishes	Look at all the kinds of fishes there.	M.A.
	water	waters	See, they're on waters.	J.M.
Spanish Noun Overgen.	ropa (clothes)	ropas	Y mira donde tiene tus ropas.	M.A.
	zacate (grass)	zacates	Zacates.	J.M.

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